

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Employees' Compensation Appeals Board

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In the Matter of KAREN ANDERSON and U.S. POSTAL SERVICE,  
POST OFFICE, Los Alamitos, Calif.

*Docket No. 96-2259; Submitted on the Record;  
Issued July 21, 1998*

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DECISION and ORDER

Before MICHAEL J. WALSH, BRADLEY T. KNOTT,  
A. PETER KANJORSKI

The issue is whether appellant has established an arthritis condition causally related to factors of her federal employment.

On November 20, 1995 appellant filed a claim alleging that bending, lifting and prolonged standing in the performance of duty as a letter carrier had aggravated an arthritis condition.<sup>1</sup> The Office of Workers' Compensation Programs requested, by letter dated January 4, 1996, that appellant submit additional factual and medical evidence to support her claim. Appellant submitted a narrative statement on January 22, 1996. There is no indication that medical evidence was submitted.

By decision dated February 7, 1996, the Office denied the claim. In a decision dated March 6, 1996, the Office reviewed the case on its merits and denied modification of the prior decision.

The Board has reviewed the record and finds that appellant has not established an arthritis condition causally related to factors of her federal employment.

To establish that an injury was sustained in the performance of duty in an occupational disease claim, a claimant must submit the following: (1) medical evidence establishing the presence or existence of the disease or condition for which compensation is claimed; (2) a factual statement identifying employment factors alleged to have caused or contributed to the presence or occurrence of the disease or condition; and (3) medical evidence establishing that the employment factors identified by the claimant were the proximate cause of the condition for which compensation is claimed or, stated differently, medical evidence establishing that the

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<sup>1</sup> Appellant indicated on the claim form that she had filed a notice of recurrence of disability (Form CA-2a). The record indicates that appellant has a separate claim which was accepted for cervical spondylosis. This claim is not before the Board on this appeal.

diagnosed condition is causally related to the employment factors identified by the claimant.<sup>2</sup> The evidence required to establish causal relationship is rationalized medical opinion evidence, based upon a complete and accurate factual and medical background, showing a causal relationship between the claimed conditions and her federal employment.<sup>3</sup> Neither the fact that the condition became manifest during a period of federal employment, nor the belief of appellant that the condition was caused or aggravated by her federal employment, is sufficient to establish causal relation.<sup>4</sup>

In this case, appellant has identified standing, bending and lifting as contributing to her condition. Appellant must, however, submit probative medical evidence in support of her claim. Appellant stated on appeal that medical evidence had been submitted, but the Office indicated in its decisions that no medical evidence had been received and the record contains no medical evidence associated with this claim. Since the evidence does not contain a reasoned medical opinion, based on a complete and accurate background, establishing causal relationship between the identified employment factors and a diagnosed condition, the Board finds that appellant has not met her burden of proof.

The decisions of the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs dated March 6 and February 7, 1996 are affirmed.

Dated, Washington, D.C.  
July 21, 1998

Michael J. Walsh  
Chairman

Bradley T. Knott  
Alternate Member

A. Peter Kanjorski  
Alternate Member

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<sup>2</sup> *Victor J. Woodhams*, 41 ECAB 345 (1989).

<sup>3</sup> *See Walter D. Morehead*, 31 ECAB 188 (1979).

<sup>4</sup> *Manuel Garcia*, 37 ECAB 767 (1986).